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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000047

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: IRAQI ELECTION COMMISSION DISQUALIFIES IRAQI VOTE
IN TURKEY

REF: 05 ANKARA 7677

Classified By: POL Counselor Robert Ford, reason 1.4 (d)

1. (C) On January 4, Commissioner Safwat Sidqi told Poloff that the IECI Board had disqualified all of the Istanbul votes due to strong evidence of fraud. Ninety-five percent of these votes, estimated between 10,000-20,000, were for the Iraqi Turkman Front. The disqualification of these votes will not have any affect on seat distribution.

2. (C) The decision to disqualify these ballot boxes was prompted by International Mission for Iraqi Elections (IMIE) reports as well as incongruent turnout statistics (ref). IMIE monitored all 4 polling centers in Turkey including the 3 Istanbul polling centers. The IMIE assessment noted that:

--No polling centers were established in the Kurdish areas of Turkey;

-- Repeated voting was observed in all Istanbul polling centers;

--Party agents were observed with vaseline and bleach products, presumably to help voters take off the voting ink;

--Voters were overheard to ask polling staff when they could return to vote again;

--Polling staff frequently went behind voter screens to assist voters;

--Many staff appeared to be related to each other and were very familiar with all the voters; and

--The IECI-OCV office in Istanbul reimbursed the travel cost for five buses of voters transported from Bursa and Yalova.

3. (C) Commissioner Saftwat Sidqi also noted that when the IECI examined some of the ballot boxes, the boxes appeared to be stuffed, containing on average more than 1,000 ballots per box ? twice the number of votes normally contained by a ballot box. The Commissioner told Poloff that the IECI would hold a press conference within the next week to discuss complaints generated during the December 15 election, and would consider mentioning the complaints about voter irregularity in Turkey and other complaints at that time.

KHALILZAD